

LEAs do not have funding for teams dedicated to meet pre-existing mandates and needs around cybersecurity and data privacy efforts, thus adding AI designees may further strain limited resources. However, unlike its counterpart in the House (HB 1297), SB 979 removes the resource-intensive requirement that LEAs must submit an annual inventory of systems that employ AI, along with the required associated impact assessments, making the implementation of the bill more manageable for LEAs.

MSDE embraces its leadership role in building best practices and guidelines surrounding AI and believes this work will assist LEAs in implementing systems that will best serve students and school staff. Even so, currently, MSDE does not have the subject matter experts or personnel to lead the LEAs in the fast-growing field of AI. As a result, MSDE anticipates the need to hire one Educational Technology AI Specialist and one Educational Technology Specialist to implement the directives outlined in the bill. Substantial participation and support from the AI Subcabinet of the Governor's Executive Council will be necessary to develop and update guidelines and best practices that promote the safe and responsible use of AI systems in Maryland schools. Currently, there is no existing policy on AI within the DoIT IT Security Manual, which is the official guide that establishes IT policies and protocol for all State agencies. Given DoIT's authority, MSDE will need their guidance while collaborating with the AI Subcabinet of the Governor's Executive Council to ensure alignment of emerging state AI policies.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 979**. For further information, please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne at 410-767-0504, or Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov.